

# *Japan remains undefeated in the Premier 12 baseball tournament*

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**Hiroto Takahashi**

Tokyo, Nov 21 (PL) Japan maintained its undefeated record in the Premier 12 baseball tournament by defeating the United States 9-1 today in both teams' in the super round, played at the Tokyo Dome stadium in the Japanese capital.

After winning all their games during the group stage in Chinese Taipei, the Japanese called on their pitching staff to hold off a U.S. team that finished in second place in the American key, thanks to a powerful offense.

Starters Hiroto Takahashi and Rich Hill hung four rings on the board until they went to the dugout and their replacements could not prevent the gates to the plate from opening.

A Colby Thomas' solo home run at the start of the fifth inning off a delivery from reliever Chihiro Sumida gave the team, led by the experienced Mike Scioscia, a momentary lead. Still, the Asians rebounded a few minutes later with a three-run homer that was enough to clinch the win.

Four hits, including a double by Shogo Sakakura that brought a teammate home and a triple by Kaito Kozono that drove in two, plated the runs, all off the record of the defeated Darrell Thompson.

Kozono reaffirmed himself as the offensive hero of the reigning champions and top of the world rankings, hitting a two-run homer in the seventh with two runners on and another in the eighth with a sac fly to accumulate seven RBIs in the contest.

Sumida took the credit with a two-inning work thanks to the support of rescuers Koki Kitayama, Shoma Fujijira, and Rikuto Yokoyama, who kept silent the bat of the Americans who had 16 strikeouts in this match.

Tomorrow Thursday at noon, local time, the Americans will again take the field at the majestic venue to face Chinese Taipei, a team that lost 0-2 to Venezuela in the opening game of the super round.

The night match will pit the Japanese against the South Americans, in a duel to determine who keeps their record of defeats unblemished at the finals.

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